United Nations A/63/PV.20

General Assembly

Sixty-third session

Official Records

20th plenary meeting
Monday, 6 October 2008, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann ..... (Nicaragua)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

Request for the inclusion of an additional item submitted by the Secretary-General (A/63/232)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly will now consider a request submitted by the Secretary-General in document A/63/232, relating to the judges of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991.

In his note, the Secretary-General informs the General Assembly that the current terms of office of the ad litem judges and the permanent judges come to an end on 23 August 2009 and on 16 November 2009, respectively.

In the absence of a provision by the Statute of the International Tribunal to extend the terms of office of those judges, the approval of the Security Council and of the General Assembly would be needed in order to extend the terms of office of the ad litem and permanent judges of the Tribunal.

In addition, on 13 August 2008, after consultation with the President of the Security Council and the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General appointed Mr. Christoph Flügge of Germany to replace Judge Wolfgang Schomburg, who will resign from service with the International Tribunal on 18 November 2008.

In order for the Assembly to consider those matters, the Secretary-General has requested, pursuant to rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the agenda of the sixty-third session of the Assembly of an additional item entitled "Judges of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991".

Owing to the important and urgent nature of the item, unless there is an objection, may I take it that the General Assembly agrees that the relevant provision of rule 40 of the rules of procedure, which would require a meeting of the General Committee on the question of the inclusion of this item in the agenda, could be waived?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): May I take it that the General Assembly, on the proposal of the Secretary-General, wishes to include in the agenda of the current session an additional item entitled "Judges of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991" under heading I, "Organizational, administrative and other matters"?

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

08-53664 (E)

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The item is therefore included as item 154.

In his note, the Secretary-General further requests that the item be considered directly in plenary meeting. May I take it that the General Assembly, as requested by the Secretary-General, wishes to consider this item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly will consider this item on Thursday, 9 October 2008, after the issuance of the relevant documents relating to the item.

Agenda item 100 (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/63/1)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Members will recall that the Secretary-General presented his annual report (A/63/1) to the General Assembly at its 5th plenary meeting, on 23 September 2008.

Mr. Ripert (France) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Turkey and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia, associate themselves with this statement.

I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization (A/63/1). The details of the views of the European Union (EU) on some of the report's main topics and on the main challenges ahead will be distributed to members. I take this opportunity to highlight certain issues.

The EU is fully committed to an effective multilateralism in which a central role is played by the United Nations. Strengthening the United Nations is a European priority. The EU remains convinced that the reforms of the United Nations system need to make rapid progress with a view to enhancing the Organization's representativity, transparency and effectiveness. The EU reiterates its commitment to engaging actively to that end in an open and substantive dialogue with all Member States.

The EU is committed to Secretariat management reform in order to allow the Secretary-General to improve human resources and personnel accountability and introduce results-based administrative methods.

As in the past, the reform of the operational activities of the United Nations is a priority for the EU in order to contribute more effectively to the development of the countries of the South. The EU strongly supports the resolution recently adopted by the General Assembly on system-wide coherence aimed at strengthening the capacity of United Nations entities to harmonize their efforts in the area of development. The EU fully supports efforts to further strengthen the capabilities of the United Nations system in the area of gender equality and the empowerment of women through a consolidated entity.

The EU strongly supports the three main pillars of the United Nations referred to in the Secretary-General's report: sustainable development, peace and security and human rights, which are interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

In terms of sustainable development, the EU remains strongly committed to the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, in particular the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It has very actively contributed, collectively and through individual initiatives of its member States, to the success of the high-level meeting on Africa's development needs and the high-level meeting on the MDGs, held here recently. The EU welcomes the decision to hold a new high-level meeting on the MDGs in 2010. The EU will continue to encourage the international community, developed and developing countries alike, to redouble their efforts to achieve the MDGs, particularly in Africa.

The EU is deeply concerned about the steep increase in food prices, including staple foods. The crisis, combined with the energy crisis, could jeopardize the achievement of the MDGs and increase social and political tensions. Following the conference held in Rome in June, the EU made a number of proposals to mitigate the effects of the crisis. The EU commends the Secretary-General for having taken immediate action by setting up the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, tasked with promoting coordinated action between all United Nations agencies.

Tackling climate change is, of course, a key priority for both the United Nations and the EU. The EU strongly supports the central role of the United Nations in the elaboration of a post-2012 global climate change agreement and is actively participating in the global negotiations to be completed no later than the end of 2009, when the fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change will be held in Copenhagen.

In order to meet those combined challenges, the European Union will honour its commitments in the area of financing for development. We will work to ensure that the Doha Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus produces significant results. Along with all its development partners, the European Union will also work to improve the quality and impact of its aid.

With regard to peace and security, the European Union believes that it is essential to strengthen the operational capacity of the United Nations. Europe unreservedly supports the efforts made by the United Nations in the area of preventive diplomacy and mediation. We believe that it is necessary to adequately strengthen and structure the Department of Peacekeeping Operations with a view to improving planning, command and information management at the strategic level.

The European Union acknowledges the intrinsic link between security, political, development and humanitarian aspects in peacekeeping operations. We shall pay particular attention to potential interaction and synergies between United Nations peacekeeping operations and those of the European Union in order to maximize their joint impact on the ground.

The European Union will continue to place emphasis on the post-conflict efforts of the United Nations. We reiterate our support for the Peacebuilding Commission and call for the strengthening of its capacities so that it can achieve its full potential.

The European Union is resolved to increase its support for the efforts of the United Nations to combat terrorism, as well as to contribute to strengthening international consensus on a normative framework. In that regard, the European Union welcomes the consensus that prevailed during first formal review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy since its adoption by the General Assembly. It should serve to motivate Member States in their negotiations on a comprehensive convention on international terrorism to supplement the existing legal framework.

The European Union remains committed to international disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. We shall continue to work towards a successful outcome to the review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, including the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The European Union underscores the importance of the work done to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We welcome the successful outcome of the Second Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We support the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons, as well as the range of efforts undertaken to combat the uncontrolled spread of conventional weapons, including small arms and their ammunition.

With regard to international justice, the goal of ending impunity for those responsible for serious crimes continues to be at the top of the European Union's priorities. We firmly believe that there can be no lasting peace without independent international justice. We reiterate our support for international criminal tribunals, and especially the International Criminal Court.

With regard to humanitarian assistance, the European Union will continue tangibly and coherently to promote both international humanitarian law and its greater observance. The European Union will work to strengthen the coordination of humanitarian assistance in line with country-specific or thematic resolutions and along the lines of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, which emphasizes the fundamental principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. We strongly underscore the need to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and to guarantee humanitarian access to people in need of assistance.

The European Union attaches great importance to implementing the principle of the responsibility to protect, which was adopted at the 2005 World Summit. We shall participate actively in the General Assembly and the Security Council in the consideration of the

issue of protecting populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

Promoting and strengthening the rule of law at the national and international levels remains one of the European Union's priorities. We emphasize the need to provide all the necessary support to the Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group, which is supported by the Rule of Law Unit in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, so that it may effectively carry out its functions.

In the year of the sixtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the promotion and protection of human rights remains one of the key priorities of the European Union, which will pay special attention to improving the effectiveness of all relevant United Nations mechanisms.

The Human Rights Council, which has now put its institutional mechanisms in place, should continue to play a crucial role. The European Union will work actively in order to further enhance that role. At the same time, we shall continue to support the Third Committee as the body with universal membership that can effectively promote the implementation of human rights standards and further promote thematic issues of global importance. The Third Committee is also a relevant forum to address country-specific issues pertaining to certain countries.

Lastly, the European Union fully supports the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, whose independence must be ensured.

The European Union is committed to providing the United Nations with the resources necessary to address international issues relating to peace and security, development and the promotion of human rights, in which the Organization has a central role to play. We shall continue to contribute our fair share of the expenses of the United Nations. Nevertheless, we are concerned about the growth of the regular budget of the United Nations, the continued use of add-ons and the piecemeal approach to the last budget process. The European Union will engage constructively during the sixty-third session to promote sound financial management and rigorous budgetary discipline.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Secretary-General and the entire staff of the Secretariat. On behalf of the European Union, I should like to convey our gratitude for their commitment and achievements in carrying out the mandate we have entrusted to them. They are working under increasingly difficult and dangerous conditions. I assure them of the full support of the European Union.

Ms. Blum (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first time that I address the General Assembly in plenary meeting during the sixty-third session, allow me to congratulate you on your election, Mr. President, and to wish you every success in your work. Likewise, I should like to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General for preparing and introducing his report (A/63/1) on the work of the Organization and for his effective efforts at the helm of the United Nations.

We note with interest the Secretary-General's approach of focusing the efforts of the Organization on three key areas: delivering results for those most in need, securing global goods and creating a stronger United Nations through full accountability. The challenges facing the Organization are enormous. They include the difficulties we face in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the need to intensify efforts to eradicate poverty and ensure sustained economic growth and sustainable development. Those challenges entail a broader dimension in the case of middle-income countries. Despite the progress they have made with regard to growth, there are limiting factors in the implementation of long-term growth programmes. The United Nations and the international community must pay attention to the priorities and needs of middle-income countries, especially given the current global financial crisis.

The dialogue on the global food crisis must continue to be a priority of the United Nations. In that regard, we reiterate our satisfaction at the creation of the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, as well as at the rest of the activities being carried out by the Organization to address the problem.

We agree with the Secretary-General concerning the urgency of breaking the impasse on agricultural trade liberalization. The imbalances in international markets must be faced in order to improve investment and agricultural development conditions in developing countries. The relationship between the global food crisis, the global demand for energy and climate change must continue to be addressed as a necessary step in preparing effective actions on those three fronts.

As pointed out by President Alvaro Uribe Vélez in his statement during the general debate two weeks ago, Colombia finds itself in a privileged position to contribute effectively and responsibly to the protection of the environment and the promotion of alternative energy. Colombia has more than 43 million hectares of savannah area, a large portion of which is underutilized, where it is possible to increase agricultural production and develop the biofuel industry by growing sugar cane and African oil palm without affecting food production. That new industry has brought great benefits to the country, reflected in a greater dynamism in the agriculture and livestock sector, the generation of thousands of rural jobs and the stimulation of investment, as well as research and technological development.

Colombia firmly maintains its commitment to the global fight against terrorism. In that regard, my country rejects all forms and manifestations of that scourge and supports initiatives aimed at putting a definitive end to that terrible crime. Through our democratic security policy and our comprehensive approach to fighting terrorism, Colombia has made great progress in containing and eliminating that threat and in reducing crime rates. Security has been re-established throughout the national territory, while the rule of law has been consolidated and democratic institutions have been strengthened. Likewise, we have achieved the demobilization and reintegration of approximately 48,000 persons formerly belonging to illegal armed groups.

Colombia attaches great importance to fulfilling its commitments under the framework of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We are aware that the world will never be able to overcome that scourge without the full commitment of all United Nations Member States to condemning terrorist actions in all their forms and increasing cooperation and information exchange among States. Likewise, we must be committed to the fight against all related crimes, such as asset laundering and illicit drug trafficking, the principal source of financing for terrorism.

My delegation would like to highlight the initiative of the Secretary-General to achieve greater accountability within the Secretariat. We join in his call for Member States to fulfil their obligations in order to allow the implementation of established mandates. The strengthening, relevance and effectiveness of the Organization depend on the full commitment of all who are part of it.

Strengthening the work of the United Nations and contributing to the search for effective solutions are joint tasks. In that regard, we welcome the strengthening of ties between the Organization and civil society, as well as with the business community. To achieve real progress in meeting the challenges before us, it is essential to actively involve broad segments of society. Greater participation by those sectors can help us to attain the goals we have set for ourselves, in harmony with the central role of States in the coordination and implementation of activities on the ground.

We are more than halfway towards the deadline for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and the challenges are greater than ever. The world needs the full commitment of the United Nations and of each of its Member States in order to overcome the new obstacles facing our Organization and achieve the goals agreed upon by our heads of State and Government eight years ago.

Allow me to reiterate our support for the work of the Secretary-General and for his determination to lead the United Nations with dedication, focus and commitment, as well as our disposition to work together in search of a better world.

Mr. Malmierca Díaz (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank the Secretary-General for the presentation of his annual report (A/61/1). The report clearly affirms that development is not the privilege of a handful of people, but a right for all. Development must enjoy a predominant place on the agenda of the United Nations. Thus, we welcome the commitment of the Secretary-General to giving special priority to this issue and to strengthening the role of the United Nations in its promotion, acknowledging the need to scale up financing as one of the keys to achieving real progress.

We consider the proposal on strengthening the development pillar of the Secretariat to be important. The matter is being carefully studied by our country and we will actively and constructively participate in its debate. We must ensure that the Organization has the necessary tools to meet the expectations of Member States, particularly developing countries.

In general, we agree with the report's overview of the complex situation regarding the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly amid the difficult current international situation, marked by the convergence of various international crises. Let us say it very clearly: the Millennium Development Goals will not be met. They will not be met, not because the goals outlined are too ambitious; on the contrary, they are very timid and insufficient. The Goals will not be met because the current international order is profoundly unjust and unsustainable, given that the current economic, commercial and financial order marginalizes 80 per cent of the world's population, sacrificing them for the extravagance of a very small minority.

The Millennium Development Goals will remain an unattainable dream for the great majority because more than 100 countries of the South do not and will not have the $150 billion needed to achieve them — a sum that represents barely 10 per cent of the more than $1 trillion spent today on military expenditure.

Although the report mentions other internationally agreed-upon development goals, it fails to identify specific proposals on how the Organization should act to address key issues, such as a lasting solution to external debt crisis, the reform of the international financial architecture and other problems that are part of a much wider and more diverse development agenda.

The establishment of an international order based on solidarity, social justice, equity and respect for the rights of the peoples and of every human being is more urgent than ever before. We do not need more rhetoric or empty promises. The question is whether those who are responsible for the chaotic and unequal world in which we live today are willing to relinquish at least part of their privileges and wastefulness.

We welcome that in the report climate change is acknowledged as one of the main issues of the Organization. That is particularly important given the important negotiation process lying ahead, from which we expect much more ambitious goals to reduce greenhouse gases worldwide.

The "dangerous carbon habit" referred to in paragraph 91 of the report has been identified by Member States in an important consensus reflected in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which strongly expresses the need to change unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, but mainly those promoted by developed countries. Without this sine qua non, it will not be possible to forward in the battle to free the world from the environmental crisis.

Massive consumer waste in the industrialized countries jeopardizes the survival of the human race. Phenomena such as global warming, the dangerous rise in sea level, the indiscriminate felling of forests, the attempt to use food as fuel to be squandered in the cars of the United States and of Europe, the depletion of fossil fuels and the irrational use of water sources, inter alia, pose dire threats to life. We must act — and act fast — and the developed countries, which are responsible for 76 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions, have the moral obligation and the main historical responsibility here.

We uphold both the need for the existence of the United Nations and its in-depth reform and democratization. But, that must be done in full respect for its Charter without redrafting or distorting its purposes and principles. The main challenge facing us is to reform the United Nations so that it serves the interests of all nations equally. We cannot allow the reform to fail and our Organization to become an instrument serving the interests and whims of a few rich and powerful countries.

The report deals with the controversial topic of the responsibility to protect, while many important questions and legitimate concerns with regard to this concept remain unanswered. It is the duty of the General Assembly to give transparent and deep consideration to this question and to take the necessary decisions. Some intend to implement this concept even before it is clearly defined. Cuba opposes such intentions, since they would open up the possibility of turning the responsibility to protect into an instrument that could easily be manipulated to attack the sacred principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

We must strengthen the General Assembly's leading role as the only United Nations organ where there is no place for hegemonies, where we all have voice and a vote, and where the obsolete right to veto does not exist. On the other hand, we will not be able to talk about true reform of this Organization until a real reform of the Security Council takes place. That is why Cuba welcomes the decision to start, at an early

date and in the framework of the General Assembly, an intergovernmental negotiation process on the reform of the Security Council.

We hope that this process will allow us to make concrete progress as soon as possible. We urgently need a truly equitable and representative Security Council that acts on behalf of all and within the mandate conferred upon it by the Charter, without encroaching, as it is increasingly doing, on the functions and prerogatives of other bodies of the system.

The political manipulation of human rights, selectivity, partiality and double standards in the handling of these matters by the most powerful countries must cease. We have the sacred duty to protect and promote all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, against the attempt to mutilate, rewrite or reinterpret them so as to adjust them to the unipolar order and the hegemonic interests of the few.

We will have to continue working so that the genuine international cooperation becomes the cornerstone of the work of the Human Rights Council. In his report, the Secretary-General highlights the increasing presence on the ground of the United Nations bodies devoted to human rights, as well as the bolstering of the Organization's rapid response capacity in this area. However, in this context, it is vital to stress the importance of fully applying the principle that human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent.

Bearing in mind that, by describing activity in the field, the report limits itself only to developing countries, giving the impression that work on human rights is not necessary in industrialized countries. However, in the industrialized world there is still much to do. Accordingly, the application of the principle of consent should always be taken into account to promote what the Secretary-General designates as a new era in human rights.

There cannot be democracy without the participation of the people, without social justice, without individual and collective well-being and without human solidarity. These guidelines should be taken into consideration in the work of the United Nations Democracy Fund.

With regard to system-wide coherence in the United Nations, it is necessary to acknowledge that operational activities should be guided, first and foremost, by the national policies and development priorities of each country. The United Nations development bodies in the field must not engage in activities that are not directly linked to economic and social development, let alone promote conditionality in their work. The developing countries' views and priorities, as well as respect for intergovernmental mandates in the field of operational activities, are essential.

I would like to finish by supporting the conclusion of the Secretary-General in his report that,

> "Today, more than ever, thanks to its universal membership and global reach, the United Nations can effect positive global change, making the world a safer, more prosperous and more just place for all people." (*para. 141*)

The challenges that lie ahead are serious ones. More than ever, the world needs the United Nations.

Mr. Le Luong Minh (Viet Nam): Mr. President, at the outset, on behalf of the Vietnamese delegation, I would like to congratulate you on your election as President of this sixty-third session of the General Assembly and pledge to you our fullest cooperation with a view to contributing to its success.

I thank the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization contained in document A/63/1 covering a wide spectrum of important issues, such as development, peace and security, human rights, humanitarian affairs and United Nations reform.

Eight years after our leaders adopted the Millennium Declaration, we share the concern expressed by the Secretary-General that, although significant gains have been recorded towards the global goal of halving extreme poverty by 2015, many countries will not be able to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. More than one billion people in the world continue to live below the poverty line. Hundreds of millions are suffering from hunger. Tens of millions of school-age children are not in school. Discrimination and violence against women remain widespread. In the year 2007 alone, there were 2.5 million new cases of HIV infection. Lack of access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation continues to make the hard life of the poor even harder.

Against the backdrop of the global food crisis, the increase in energy prices, global warming, climate

change and the global economic slowdown all pose a real threat, undermining the progress made by developing countries in their struggle to overcome the status of underdevelopment and mitigate the negative impacts that development has had on those most in need, namely the poor, women and children. With half the world's adult population owning only 1 per cent of the global wealth, as the Secretary-General pointed out, the ills of the developing world cannot be cured without genuine and active cooperation and assistance from the developed countries within the framework of a global partnership for development, which he emphasized as being critical. We join his call for delivery on official development assistance commitments, and we hope that his goal of $50 billion per year by 2010 will be achieved.

Equally important as a means to make globalization contribute to, rather than hinder, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is an open, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory trading and financial system. The delayed conclusion of the Doha Round of trade negotiations will, among other things, not only worsen the food crisis, but also make the efforts to overcome it even more difficult. The successful conclusion of the Doha Round must be set as a high priority for Member States.

Less than two weeks ago, under your guidance, Sir, the General Assembly held two high-level events on the MDGs and on the special needs of Africa, where our leaders, together with other stakeholders, analysed the situation, shared success stories and lessons learned, discussed new initiatives and made new promises. The lives of hundreds of millions of people in the world living on less than 1 dollar a day, especially those in Africa, depend on whether our actions in the coming years will turn those promises into their food, shelter, education and health, as the Secretary-General put it, and the international community must not disappoint their hopes.

During the past year, the maintenance of international peace and security has continued to face intertwined opportunities and challenges. In addition to 17 operating missions, the ongoing deployment of other peacekeeping operations in Africa is expected to create more leverage for strengthening the local peacemaking process and ultimately ending the prolonged crises. Preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention and mediation efforts led by the United Nations have helped reinforce political dialogue and national reconciliation in the service of lasting peace and stability in many countries in Africa and Asia. By the same token, peacebuilding activities have contributed to promoting peace agreements, laying the foundation for sustainable peace and development and addressing the special needs of conflict-affected States.

However, besides the escalation of protracted armed conflicts and tensions in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia, the outbreak of new disputes in the Balkans and the Caucasus add to our shared concern. The growing complexity of protracted conflicts has caused an abrupt surge in the demand for peacekeeping operations and overstretched the capacity of the Organization on multiple related fronts. Terrorism also continues to be a serious threat to international peace and security and an assault on the principles of law and order, human rights and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

In the face of those challenges, we fully support the Secretary-General's conclusion that the crucial role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security must be reaffirmed and further strengthened. We commend and support the recent steps undertaken by the Secretary-General to improve the management of the Organization in the fields of peacekeeping operations, conflict prevention and resolution and disarmament, and we stand ready to contribute further to the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (resolution 60/288), adopted by the General Assembly in 2006 on the basis of the fundamental principles of respect for national independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

Mr. Kpotsra (Togo), Vice-President, took the Chair.

This year marks the sixtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, which has remained the key instrument for promoting universal respect for and observance of all human rights in accordance with the United Nations Charter and international law. While sharing the Secretary-General's positive assessment of the wide international acceptance of and consensus on human rights standards and the strengthening of tools and mechanisms for monitoring and encouraging compliance, we remain concerned about the continued trend of politicizing human rights and using human rights as a pretext to interfere in the internal affairs of

States, thus complicating regional and international situations and creating hurdles for the process of United Nations reform by making the work of United Nations bodies overlap.

In that connection, I wish to reaffirm Viet Nam's view that the protection and promotion of human rights can only be effective when they are in keeping with the principles of objectivity and non-selectivity and when we are able to avoid their politicization, a disease that had, for decades, paralysed the former Commission on Human Rights.

As reported by the Secretary-General, the rise in the number and intensity of extreme weather events throughout the review period is striking, with an increasing number of poor people being affected by drought, floods and cyclones. The fragile security and deadly violence in Iraq, Afghanistan, the occupied Palestinian territories and many other conflict-ridden regions have forced millions of people into exile and internal displacement, with larger and larger numbers of civilians requiring urgent humanitarian assistance and access.

Climate change and armed conflicts are exacerbating both natural and man-made disasters and making them more dangerous than ever before, demanding even greater international cooperation to cope with them. We welcome the Secretary-General's commitment to enhancing the United Nations partnership with regional organizations and Governments in preparing for and responding to such challenges.

In order to adapt to a vastly changed world and better fulfil its mandates under the Charter, the United Nations and its principal organs, including the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and specialized agencies, must be strengthened in a more comprehensive and democratic manner. Furthermore, the experience of the past year in mediating the resolution of conflicts and mitigating the consequences of natural disasters manifests even more clearly the indispensable and effective role of regional organizations. That experience also shows that the roles of the United Nations and of regional organizations should and can be mutually strengthening. Viet Nam will continue to contribute to efforts aimed at making the United Nations, in close partnership with regional organizations, more representative, more effective and more responsive to the interests of Member States and their peoples.

Mr. Davide (Philippines): I am honoured to take the floor to put on record my delegation's commendation to the Secretary-General for the achievements of our Organization, which His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon summed up in the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, contained in document A/63/1, covering United Nations activities during his second year in office. My delegation congratulates our bold, dynamic, brilliant and eminently competent Secretary-General for this magnum opus.

The 28-page report modestly refrains from extolling the heroic performance of our Organization's international civil servants, both in the field and at Headquarters. Yet, we know deep in our hearts that the achievements of our Organization would not have been possible without the individual and collective hard work, dedication to duty and exemplary performance of those men and women.

The report is both comprehensive and balanced. It highlights the accomplishments of our Organization in the face of daunting and complex challenges that confront it in the pursuit of the three pillars of the United Nations, namely, development, peace and security and human rights.

A new generation of global challenges, such as climate change, terrorism, food and energy crises and now the financial crisis, unmatched by adequate resources or even political will, weighs heavily on the United Nations — the sole universal body upon which the world, especially its 192 Members, looks to for help, support and solutions, or even for just inspiration and hope. It is too fearful to imagine a world that can no longer find that inspiration and hope in the United Nations.

In light of the growing menace and increasing threats posed by traditional and new challenges to peace and stability, to the elimination of hunger and poverty, to relief from diseases of worldwide proportions, to assistance for sudden man-made and natural calamities, to refugees and migrants driven from their homes owing to conflicts or economic need and to a host of other global concerns, we need to pay heed to the conclusions of the Secretary-General and act swiftly and decisively on his recommendations before these global problems reach catastrophic levels.

In order to deliver results for the people most in need, we need to awaken ourselves to the grim realities

prevailing among the world's poor, hearken to the voice of conscience and overcome selfishness by summoning our innate good Samaritan spirit in order to help lift the 1.2 billion still mired in extreme poverty, the 1.2 billion suffering from neglected tropical diseases, the 1 billion lacking access to safe drinking water, the 2.6 billion without access to adequate sanitation and the 9.9 million refugees, particularly in Africa. Each day of delay in reaching out to them worsens their plight and aggravates their agony.

This brings us to the urgency of meeting the targets we set for ourselves in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) less than seven years from now. The achievement of our MDG commitments consists not only in the statistical process of halving poverty and achieving other development goals, but also synergistically involves other development processes, particularly financing for development, the Doha Round of multilateral trade talks and development cooperation for aid effectiveness. We cannot afford to fail in reaching consensus here. Otherwise, we risk the escalation of political tensions into the conflicts that poverty and lack of basic education spawn.

The Philippines wishes, therefore, to echo the call of the Secretary-General to achieve the $50 billion per year by 2010 in official development assistance based on 0.7 per cent of the gross national product of donor countries in order to create a better life for our world's poor.

Through preventive diplomacy and support for peace processes, our Organization, under the skilful stewardship of the Secretary-General, ably assisted Nepal in its current transition to a new democratic future. It handled and guided the preparatory process for national dialogue in the Central African Republic, the post-electoral mediation process in Kenya, the confidence-building process in Darfur, the moving forward of the political process in Somalia and in the launching and facilitation of a preparatory process leading to possible full-fledged negotiations in Cyprus.

The good offices capacity of the Secretary-General deserves to be strengthened and enhanced in order to broaden the scope of his positive influence in easing tensions in other flashpoints of the world, including Iraq and the Middle East.

It is no easy task to maintain 130,000 United Nations military and police peacekeepers supplied by 117 Member States and deployed in 19 missions around the world. The Philippines, as one of the significant troop and police contributing countries, will continue to remain actively engaged in United Nations-led peacekeeping operations, cognizant of the fact that peacekeeping leads not only to sustainable peace but also to peacebuilding and sustained development.

Another important function of the United Nations that crosscuts its three pillars is the delivery of humanitarian assistance to peoples stricken by natural disasters, which, in some instances, have been aggravated by man's neglect or abuse of the environment. As a natural disaster-prone country itself, the Philippines has benefited from the flash appeals launched by the United Nations and is grateful for the quick assistance extended by the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund, an effective multilateral relief mechanism that needs continued contributions from Member States to ensure predictability and adequacy of its resources for emergency situations.

As for securing the well-being of future generations, the Philippines concurs with the identification by the Secretary-General of four critical areas of concern upon which the survival of succeeding generations depend. They are climate change, disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, terrorism and global health.

We now have the Bali Road Map, designed last year. It sets out a process for developing a new global agreement aimed at confronting climate change. The negotiation process launched in Bali will continue until its progress is reviewed in December of this year at the meeting of the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Poznan, Poland, leading, hopefully, to an agreed outcome in Copenhagen next year.

We should not only mainstream climate change into policy and development plans, but also partner with the private sector in integrating climate change into their corporate operations. Climate change is not the responsibility of Governments alone. All must cooperate as the common inhabitants of this fragile planet, who have the responsibility to ensure that the generations yet to come shall not inherit a parched Earth incapable of sustaining life.

This is the concept of intergenerational responsibility or intergenerational justice and equity. In this regard, let me also reiterate what I have said before: that justice in the area of climate change demands that

developed countries, which have caused much damage to the environment or to the ecological balance to the detriment of the least developed or developing countries, must do more to repair the damage.

The centrepiece of all nuclear disarmament measures is the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The preparatory process leading to the 2010 Review Conference of NPT parties is under way. The Philippines intends to play an active role by fielding a qualified candidate to preside over the Review Conference, aware of the dangers of the continued strategic and non-strategic nuclear stockpiles for human existence.

The effective implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy requires innovative initiatives and long-term partnerships among Governments, the United Nations system, regional organizations and civil society.

For its part, the Philippines will intensify its advocacy of interfaith dialogue and cooperation to promote understanding and tolerance among peoples of different faiths and cultures. This will complement related initiatives, such as the Alliance of Civilizations. These initiatives, unlike weapons of war — conventional or otherwise — can better establish the genuine foundation of trust and understanding and create a more peaceful world for present and future generations.

Healthy people beget a sound nation. Hippocrates said that health is the greatest of human blessings. Disraeli claimed that the health of the people is really the foundation upon which all their happiness and all their powers as a nation depend. Poor health produces weak people, both in mind and body. Poor health lowers productivity, hence it can cause the economy to stagnate.

The provision of health care and the prevention and cure of infectious diseases, notably in tropical countries, are an intergenerational process that calls for a long-term strategy. The least developed countries sorely need external help, and the Philippines supports the view of the Secretary-General that the United Nations should take the lead in shaping the future of global health and focusing on critical priorities leading to functioning and affordable health systems by coordinating with Governments, philanthropies, foundations, the private sector, academia and civil society.

With respect to empowering the Secretariat, my delegation strongly supports the efforts of the Secretary-General in favour of a management infrastructure in the Secretariat built around achieving concrete results and his proposal for a new accountability architecture that will make the Secretariat effective and efficient in its implementation and coordination of the mandates entrusted to it by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council.

As the chief executive officer, the Secretary-General needs to dispose of broad latitude in his discretionary powers in managing the Secretariat, including with respect to its internal reforms, given the limited financial resources at his disposal. Such flexibility is needed to enable him to meet the growing and changing demands on our Organization.

In the field, it behoves the Secretariat to consider utilizing a client-analysis approach to sensitize operations to the needs and particularities of developing countries, its clients, which it is expected to serve or support. The top-down analysis of the relevance of operational tools formulated at Headquarters should be complemented by a bottom-up approach that draws inputs from Governments, which have the primacy of the ownership of country programmes, to sharpen those tools to yield maximum dividends at the country level.

The Philippines also endorses the Secretary-General's current thrust in maximizing the benefits of cooperating with regional organizations and in promoting partnership with civil society and the private sector.

Let me conclude by asserting that my delegation is gratified by the overall success of our Organization in addressing the manifold global concerns during the year under review. This success is attributed mainly to the effective leadership of the Secretary-General and the support of his senior management team. My delegation is confident that, during the Secretary-General's third year in office, our Organization will be able to do more to build on the strong foundation it has laid down so far and to reach out to and touch more people all over the world and assure them of better lives and a brighter future. Along the way, let their hope for that remain constant and strong.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, let me thank the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization, contained in document A/63/1. Beyond observing the formality of

keeping the General Assembly fully informed on the activities of the Secretariat, the document lays the groundwork for our intergovernmental organ's ongoing interaction with the Secretary-General in the framework of the healthy precedent he has established — and which he mentions in his report — to give this forum periodic briefings on topical issues. We welcome and appreciate that rapprochement of the General Assembly and the Secretariat, which is the essential basis for the good governance of this Organization.

The report reveals the scope and breadth of the tasks undertaken by the United Nations in recent times in the context of a changing global environment, marked by some lights and many shadows. In that regard, the charts that form part of the report illustrate that, when it comes to meeting the Millennium Development Goals, we are faced with the proverbial half-full glass, aggravated by the fact that the distance that separates those countries that have made the greatest progress from those on the opposite end of the scale has tended to grow. Said differently, and as confirmed at the meeting held on 25 September to assess the progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals, we face a decidedly mixed picture. Nor has there been progress in resolving some of the more intractable conflicts on the agenda of the Security Council, the capacity to react of which seems to face growing difficulties.

The same can be said of environmental matters; our stewardship of the planet's resources and even its climate leave much to be desired. On the other hand, we observe important achievements in the field of humanitarian assistance, which is significant, given the unusual number of natural and man-made disasters that have occurred. We also applaud the improvement of the capacity of the Secretariat in establishing productive partnerships with regional organizations, especially on the African continent.

The main thrust of my remarks today, however, is focused on our Organization and its performance. There, too, the half-full or half-empty glass syndrome has made itself felt. We recognize the progress made, as set forth in the report, both in addressing topics of crucial importance and in adapting the Organization to new realities. At the same time, we have some concerns that flow from the report. I should like to refer to four aspects in which, in our view, both the Secretariat and the intergovernmental machinery can and must make greater efforts to make our Organization more relevant.

In the first place, the ever-expanding agenda of the Organization, although having the virtue of addressing the development, peace and security, humanitarian and democratic governance agendas in an integral fashion, has the downside of losing focus on those matters that are vital and separating them from those that are merely important. Perhaps we need to return to our roots and reinterpret the explicit and implicit vision offered by the Charter of the United Nations in the light of the challenges of the twenty-first century. We believe that some steps were taken in that direction in the Millennium Declaration of 2000 and in the Outcome Document of the 2005 Summit, but we find that this year's report lacks a clearer framework that could bring the vision into greater relief.

Secondly, although the report reflects the recent changes in the international environment and even correctly points out that the combined energy and food crises may seriously compromise progress in the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals, its tone is somewhat in the mode of "business as usual" even as the world is being shaken by simultaneous tremors in the economic, financial, political and social spheres, all of which will have dramatic long-term consequences.

We are facing enormously important changes in the real world, and even in the world of ideas. One would like to see the United Nations on top or even ahead of those changes, rather than being dragged in their wake. We recognize that this may be a tall order, given the scale and complexity of the challenges, but it confirms the urgent need to adapt the Organization to current and future demands. In that regard, it is only fair to recognize that the Secretary-General has taken some important steps in that direction.

That brings me to my third observation. We agree with the Secretary-General that it is necessary to introduce reforms both in the Secretariat and — perhaps even more importantly — in the intergovernmental machinery. However, it would be useful to have a road map and a global vision of Secretariat reform, rather than addressing the work piecemeal, department by department. Such an approach forces us yet again to focus on a few trees, at the cost of losing sight of the forest.

Fourthly, the United Nations functions only to the extent that all of its parts — the Secretariat and the intergovernmental organs — are able to coordinate their respective roles. We, the Member States, cannot

require the Secretariat on the one hand, to comply with an ever greater range of mandates if we do not provide, on the other hand, the resources it needs to respond to and carry out those mandates.

We recognize that partial efforts have been made to finance some of the new initiatives identified in the Outcome Document of the 2005 Summit, but many tasks that the Secretariat has been charged with, such as the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, lack budgetary viability.

We also cannot ask the Secretariat to take action beyond the scope of Governments' delegation of authority. Certainly, the Secretariat has little to contribute beyond its capacity to formulate recommendations on the reform of the intergovernmental organs, including the Security Council, since the latter falls within the exclusive purview of Member States.

With that said, we fully agree with the Secretary-General on the singular nature of the United Nations. It is an important asset of humanity, and the world would be worse off without it. We must preserve and update that heritage, a task that falls jointly to the Secretariat and Member States. We have to give greater focus to our priorities. We must provide the Secretariat with the resources it needs to carry out its mission, and we must finish adapting the structure of the Secretariat and the intergovernmental forums to the complex demands of our times.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): My thanks go to the Secretary-General for his annual report on the work of the Organization (A/63/1), which provides a comprehensive and clear overview of what was achieved over the past year and also lays out what must be accomplished in the future.

This year, the international community has faced a plethora of unprecedented and unexpected challenges. Those include high food and fuel prices, climate change, a slowdown of economic growth and financial volatility. All of those crises once again confirm that a swift and common global response is vital and that the United Nations should play a central role in stirring up public awareness, drawing the attention of Member States, designing tailored strategies and actions to target each crisis, and finally pushing the community to move forward.

In that regard, my delegation would like to commend the rapid response of the Secretary-General to the food security crisis, including the establishment of the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, which produced the Comprehensive Framework for Action, providing Member States and all other relevant actors with a clear road map for tackling the crisis.

The current global food crisis will not be overcome through the efforts of any single player. Rather, it requires the joint efforts of the international community along with the coordination of the United Nations. As my Prime Minister announced in his address to the General Assembly, Korea will contribute $100 million over the next three years for emergency food aid and expand its technical cooperation to increase the agricultural productivity of developing countries.

Passing the halfway mark to the target year 2015 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), we believe that special attention should also be given to regional disparities. The efforts to alleviate Africa's extreme poverty do not seem to be making progress. More resources and attention should be allocated to address processes that have been seriously derailed and to assist off-track countries.

Keeping in mind the need to take a more active role in the global partnership for development, the Republic of Korea has increased our aid volume at a rapid pace over the past decade and introduced a road map to scale up our official development assistance (ODA). With the new ODA road map in place, our aid is expected to triple from the current level to about $3.3 billion in 2015. In addition, under Korea's Initiative for Africa's Development, begun in 2006, we have tripled our ODA to Africa during the past three years and are set to scale up further. In that vein, we also support strengthening the capacities of African countries in trade and expanding duty-free and quota-free access for products from the least developed countries.

Turning to climate change, the international community, including developed and developing countries, should make meaningful progress in designing the post-2012 climate change regime. Given the current deadlock in the negotiation process, my delegation believes that Member States need to accelerate their efforts to reach an agreement within the time frame of the Bali Road Map. In that regard, my delegation would like to express our full support

for the energetic leadership of the Secretary-General, who has worked tirelessly to ensure a successful agreement on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change by December 2009, when we are to meet in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Moreover, as President of the Republic of Korea Lee Myung-bak announced at the Group of Eight extended summit meeting in Japan, we support the global vision of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 50 per cent by 2050. Next year, we plan to announce our voluntary midterm mitigation goal for the year 2020. My delegation would like to reiterate that the Korean Government is ready to contribute to the global response to climate change by hosting a new world summit in 2012 to focus on climate change and sustainable development, so as to contribute to the robust launch of a post-2012 climate regime.

In the area of peace and security, conflict situations need to be prevented or resolved mainly through political means. In order for the United Nations to achieve that daunting goal, the Secretary-General's good offices and political mediation role should be strengthened to tackle conflicts as they arise on multiple fronts. My delegation would like to congratulate the Secretary-General on his efforts and leadership in the peace processes in such diverse areas as Nepal, the Central African Republic, Kenya, Darfur, Somalia, Cyprus and the Middle East. We fully share the view that the Department of Political Affairs has to be strengthened to effectively practice preventive diplomacy. In that regard, we believe that better functioning preventive diplomacy is likely to reduce the costs of the peacekeeping budget in the long run and, more important, save lives on the ground.

On this, the sixtieth anniversary year of United Nations peacekeeping operations, the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has been successfully completed and several essential doctrine documents have been finalized, including the capstone doctrine. The Republic of Korea will continue to support peacekeeping operations by renewing our troop deployment to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and by enacting legislation to further expand our participation in peacekeeping operations.

Transforming the fragile peace of post-conflict situations into durable peace is not an easy task. However, without such efforts, peace cannot be fully consolidated. We congratulate the newly launched United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone and hope that it will contribute to the country's long-term security and development. The Republic of Korea is hopeful that it can play a more active role in that area by joining the Peacebuilding Commission.

As the Secretary-General's report highlights, we have witnessed alarming humanitarian situations of unprecedented magnitude in the past year. During the humanitarian crisis caused by Cyclone Nargis, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon helped millions by embarking on a landmark visit to Myanmar and by making a breakthrough on securing humanitarian access. At the same time, his visit to the devastated population of Wenchun, China, which was suffering from a recent earthquake, illustrated just how important humanitarian work and a prompt response by the United Nations truly are.

Despite significant strides in delivering accountable and timely assistance from the humanitarian community, there are still key challenges that must be addressed, such as the denial of access and the threat to the safety of humanitarian workers. The United Nations should continue to make further efforts to address those challenges in order to secure the timely delivery of assistance to those most in need.

Turning to human rights, the United Nations has strengthened its human rights machinery with the launch of the Universal Periodic Review. We share the view of the Secretary-General that the Human Rights Council must ensure that nations are held accountable for the implementation of human rights standards. Failure to do so will result in undermining the credibility of the Council. Member States and the relevant bodies of the United Nations should also work together in a sincere manner to ensure the success of the Council and to promote substantive progress in protecting and promoting human rights as a universal value for all.

We are pleased to take note of the report (A/61/583) of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence on the pilot initiative of "delivering as one", which details some important lessons with regard to improvements in delivering programmes with reduced transaction costs.

Strengthening gender equality and women's empowerment is one of the core elements of system-wide coherence. As we have adopted a resolution

requesting the Secretary-General to provide detailed modalities on the composite entity option, we look forward to taking substantive action during this session of the General Assembly.

Given the fact that the 2005 World Summit embraced the concept of the responsibility to protect, my delegation looks forward to the consideration at the United Nations of the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

The Republic of Korea attaches great importance to creating a stronger United Nations through full accountability. In particular, we will make every effort to reach an agreement on the human resource framework and the new system of administration of justice. Among various efforts to increase the accountability of the United Nations, my delegation appreciates the Secretary-General's periodic informal briefings to the General Assembly with regard to his recent activities. Those briefings have led to an interactive engagement with Member States and demonstrate the Secretariat's efforts to enhance its transparency and accountability. We hope that the Secretary-General's accountability compact with senior managers will bring about real change and foster a new working culture in the Secretariat.

Let me conclude by renewing the Republic of Korea's support for the Secretariat in making the United Nations a more effective, more accountable and better functioning Organization under the able leadership of the Secretary-General.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): First of all, I wish to express my deep appreciation to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his dedication in leading the wide-ranging activities of the Organization. Japan wholeheartedly supports his determination to make the Secretariat more efficient and dynamic.

The most pressing challenge facing the United Nations is, above all, to save the bottom billion people from poverty and destitution and to enable them to lead safe and dignified lives. All the means available to the United Nations should be mobilized to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The high-level midterm review of 25 September provided an ideal opportunity for world leaders to recommit to acting together to put the achievement of the MDGs back on track. We welcome the positive outcome of the review.

Japan sought to place the MDGs at the top of the agenda at two important summits that it hosted earlier this year. The Group of Eight (G8) summit at Hokkaido focused on actions for health, water and sanitation, and education. The fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development emphasized the need to accelerate broad-based economic growth with a view to achieving a vibrant Africa. The Conference also produced a concrete action plan for the next five years. Japan is determined to follow through with the effective implementation of those commitments.

The steep rise in global food and commodities prices adversely affects the efforts to achieve the MDGs. Food security is a multifaceted and structural challenge that requires a fully coordinated response from the international community. We welcome the strong personal initiative of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to mobilize the entire United Nations system to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for short- and medium-term food security. The Comprehensive Framework for Action will serve as a good basis for the implementation of plans for countries in need. For too long in many countries, agriculture and food production have not been given the priority in development policy that they deserve. We should turn the crisis into an opportunity to better recognize the importance of investing more in agriculture and food production in order to increase food self-sufficiency.

The pursuit of reducing poverty alone will not lead us to achieve the MDGs because large segments of the billion poorest people at the bottom are trapped in conflict or struggling for survival in fragile post-conflict situations. The recent record indicates that about half of the countries in post-conflict situations have experienced a relapse of conflict within 10 years. The end of conflict should be accompanied by immediate actions to strengthen social and economic stability. The vicious cycle of armed conflict and poverty is a major challenge for today's world. In order to break that cycle, it is essential to tackle poverty and conflict together in an integrated manner. The Peacebuilding Commission is the key organ to fill some of those gaps. It deserves the full support of Member States.

Conflict resolution, peacekeeping and peacebuilding are core activities of the United Nations. With its universal and impartial characteristics, there is no more effective or more legitimate Organization than the United Nations to

take the lead in those vital activities. Japan will spare no effort to strengthen peace operations in support of the Secretary-General.

When we think about peace, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation should garner no less attention. As the only country to have suffered nuclear devastation, we are determined to stop proliferation and to work towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. Japan will submit another draft resolution at this session of the General Assembly to lay out concrete measures towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Climate change is another major challenge to humankind, in our generation and beyond. Its impacts affect our day-to-day livelihoods and economies and are directly related to sustainable development. This summer, G8 leaders agreed a global long-term target to reduce emissions and to seek to create an effective global framework under the United Nations in which all major economies participate in a responsible way. We must mobilize our wisdom towards an effective post-2013 international climate regime. Japan is determined to play a leading role in such efforts. We welcome support for the Cool Earth 50 initiative, which is an effort of developing countries to mitigate and adapt, fully utilizing environmental technology and financial resources.

This year, the sixtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights will be celebrated all over the world, including in Japan. Human rights are the birthright of the peoples of every nation. No Government may shirk its responsibility to protect and promote them. We support the efforts of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to strengthen the role of his Office in providing assistance to countries in need.

The protection and promotion of human rights should be vigorously pursued with the nexus of peace, human rights and development in mind. Human security entails a human-centred and integrated approach, which is essential in tackling freedom from fear and want while putting the livelihoods and dignity of individuals and communities at the centre of our focus. We are pleased with the broad support for such an approach among Member States, as manifested in the fourth meeting of Friends of Human Security and the thematic debate of the General Assembly last May. Japan will work together with other interested countries to ensure that the human security perspective is better reflected in the broad areas of activity of the United Nations. As I have mentioned, those include the MDGs, food security, peacebuilding, climate change and the protection of human rights.

We need to enhance the capacity of the United Nations to work more coherently and effectively for individuals in need on the ground. The ongoing efforts to reform the United Nations must be accelerated to restructure it to meet the realities and requirements of the contemporary world.

First, the system-wide coherence of the normative and operational activities of the United Nations should be pursued through a bottom-up approach, while continuously focusing on the protection and empowerment of the individual and communities. For instance, Japan believes that coordination and partnership with the United Nations system to achieve gender equality and empower women are critical. With a view to filling the gaps that have been revealed with regard to support on the ground, we should continue to discuss how the United Nations might best carry out its operations in a more coherent and effective manner.

Secondly, Japan attaches great importance to the transparent, effective and efficient management of the United Nations. We fully support the Secretary-General's management reform efforts. No doubt, human resources are the most precious resources of the United Nations. Contractual arrangements and conditions of service have to be considered in conjunction with key policy issues, such as mobility and rotation, geographical distribution, career development, performance evaluation and accountability. Those measures should help hold the Secretariat accountable and responsible to Member States. Sound and prudent financial management is also essential to ensure the strong and continued commitment of Member States to United Nations activities. To that end, Japan stands ready to contribute to developing consensus on the budget of the United Nations.

Lastly, the reform of the United Nations will not be complete without meaningful Security Council reform. Japan welcomes the unanimous decision of the General Assembly on the last day of the sixty-second session to commence intergovernmental negotiations in informal plenary meetings of the General Assembly no later than at the end of next February. Japan continues

to believe that the Security Council needs to be reformed by expanding both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership in order to reflect the realities of the twenty-first century. We will act constructively and participate in the forthcoming intergovernmental negotiations to achieve the earliest possible reform.

Let me conclude my remarks by renewing Japan's firm commitment to creating a more effective and better functioning United Nations.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation would like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his report (A/63/1) on the work of the Organization. The report has reviewed the progress made by the United Nations in various fields over the past year and has described current and future tasks and challenges facing the Organization. I wish to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his diligent work and outstanding performance in the past year.

Today, our world is undergoing profound and complex changes that present us with unprecedented challenges and opportunities. In the face of continuously emerging global threats and challenges, it has become the widely shared consensus of the international community that we should engage in multilateral cooperation using the United Nations as the platform to jointly respond to challenges and promote peace and development for humankind.

Halfway to the deadline for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), we note that achieving them on time by 2015 will be a daunting task. African countries face especially huge challenges in that regard. China calls on developed countries to honour their commitment to allocate 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product to official development assistance in order to help developing countries, African countries in particular, to respond to development challenges. In June of this year, the Millennium Development Goals Africa Steering Group made its proposals for the achievement of the Goals in Africa. We hope that countries will strengthen cooperation with the United Nations and work jointly to put those proposals into practice.

Climate change has become a real challenge that requires a joint response within the framework of international cooperation. Negotiations on the implementation of the Bali Road Map are at a critical juncture at this moment. We hope that the Conference of States Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Poznan this December, will achieve positive results and lay the foundation for an agreement at Copenhagen in 2009.

The humanitarian issue involves the survival of the so-called bottom billion and is closely related to the peace, stability and development of the world. We support a central coordinating role for the United Nations in international humanitarian cooperation on the basis of respect for the wishes of the recipient countries, their autonomy and their right to participate.

The United Nations plays an important role in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding. We welcome reasonable reform of the Department of Political Affairs so as to enhance its mediation and good offices capacity and bring into play the unique advantages of the United Nations in the area of conflict prevention. We support the United Nations in strengthening the planning and management of peacekeeping operations, optimizing resource allocations and improving the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations.

The Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which was adopted in 2006, marked a milestone in our efforts to strengthen international counter-terrorism cooperation. We must build on the achievements of the past two years and continue to work towards comprehensive and balanced implementation by the United Nations system of the four pillars of the Strategy.

The situation in the Middle East continues to be the biggest test for the United Nations. The only feasible way to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Middle East question is to carry out political negotiations on the basis of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and the principle of land for peace, in order to settle disputes and achieve peaceful coexistence between Israel and all Arab States, including an independent Palestinian State. We sincerely hope that the leaders of Israel and Palestine will maintain the momentum in the dialogue. We support a greater role for the United Nations on the Middle East question.

The crisis in Darfur, the Sudan, tests the unity of the international community. The involvement of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the issue of the Sudan has further complicated the crisis in Darfur and Sudan. Both the League of Arab States and the African

Union (AU) have expressed concern over the indictment of the leader of the Sudan by the ICC. We believe that the parties concerned should respect and heed the views of Arab and African countries.

China appreciates and welcomes the fact that the parties concerned in Zimbabwe have settled their election-related disputes through dialogue and negotiations and have reached an agreement on the establishment of a Government of national unity. The Southern African Development Community and the AU, working with former President Mbeki of South Africa as the mediator, have played a leading and constructive role in promoting a political settlement of the question of Zimbabwe. China commends and supports such a role. Facts have once again proven that, as an effective means for the peaceful settlement of disputes, mediation is playing an increasingly important role in today's world.

There are currently both opportunities and challenges in the area of international strategic security. The United Nations should continue to take the lead by revitalizing the multilateral arms control and disarmament agenda. Countries should work together to further strengthen the international non-proliferation regime, especially to safeguard the authority, effectiveness and universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We oppose any form of proliferation of nuclear weapons. Countries must fulfil their international non-proliferation obligations and, on that basis, their right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy should be respected and safeguarded.

The reform of the United Nations has achieved many positive results since 2005. In the next phase, reform should focus more on the question of development in order to bring benefits to developing countries.

China supports the reform of the Security Council. We believe that priority should be given to increasing the representation of developing countries, and in particular African countries. China supports that the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council Reform continue to play an important role. We hope a general agreement will be reached among Member States on relevant questions.

We approve, in general, of the work done by the Human Rights Council since it was established. We support the Council in carrying out its work in a fair, objective and non-selective manner and on the basis of mutual respect, so as to promote constructive international dialogue and cooperation in the area of human rights.

We support the reform of the Secretariat with a view to improving efficiency, saving resources and strengthening accountability.

Multilateralism and multilateral cooperation using the platform of the United Nations represent the only way to maintain and promote world peace and development. We are willing to work together with other countries to build a strong United Nations and a harmonious world of lasting peace and common prosperity.

Mr. Voto-Bernales (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): In the current circumstances, it makes more sense than ever for us to ask ourselves once again how globalization is affecting our countries. Generally speaking, we believe that a look at today's global society reveals that economic growth has served to involve more countries in trade, investment and migration. It has brought us closer together through communication technologies, which have increased efficiency, transformed economies and placed a vast universe of information at the reach of millions of people. Democratic and human rights are also now more widespread.

There are disquieting signs of fragmentation, however, as the reality of poverty and social inequality has become more apparent. In some regions, there has been an increase in conflicts spilling over borders. Along with the criminality they entail, global threats such as terrorism and drug trafficking have grown. Warnings have increased in connection with the degradation of the environment and global warming. Such crises as the food and energy crises have produced the danger of instability in States, as well as risks to international governance and security. All of that points to a changing and complex international situation that underscores the concept of interdependence and calls for shared and proportional responsibilities and efforts on the part of States to address those important issues on a multilateral level within the United Nations system and regional organizations. Given that situation, Peru would like to reiterate its belief that renewed and strengthened multilateralism is the most effective tool for ensuring global governance based on the rule of law and respect

for human rights and the values of international peace and justice.

As pointed out by the report of the Secretary-General (A/63/1), the task before us today is to continue the reform process in a determined and responsible manner so as to strengthen the United Nations in order to make it more efficient in reaching the poorest and most vulnerable and to better coordinate the use of global goods of humankind. The immediate goal is to remain committed to stabilizing the international political situation and to establish a strong international alliance to achieve development and social justice. Member States should continue their multilateral efforts to reform the United Nations while maintaining a spirit of compromise and realistic expectations. We must act with determination while being aware of the fact that efforts should be aimed at producing substantial mandates and results in a reasonable time frame that serve to strengthen the effectiveness and credibility of both multilateralism and the United Nations.

The reform processes of the Organization — including those relating to the Security Council, system-wide coherence and the Secretariat — continue to call for a sensitive and sustained negotiations process. The process of implementing the agreements reached in the Outcome Document of the 2005 Summit demands that we employ more imagination and a heightened spirit of compromise.

Peru is currently facing the formidable challenge of combating poverty and inequality. Along with promoting economic growth, opening up new markets and encouraging investment and the creation of jobs, we have achieved positive results in implementing comprehensive programmes to provide social assistance and increase inclusion while at the same time decentralizing and improving our productive capacity and expanding access to health and education services.

We believe that the coordinated support of the United Nations and international systems should serve both to catalyse and complement national efforts in the area of development, including efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Peru is confident that it will achieve the Goals before 2015.

As agreed at the Millennium Summit, there is a need to forge a global alliance for development. To that end, we agreed to put in place a more open financial and trading system that is based on predictable and non-discriminatory rules. By sharing in the benefits of globalization and reducing the effects of crises, our countries will be able to ensure that their peoples can partake of the benefits of stability and growth while producing tangible improvements in their living conditions. That will also make it possible for our peoples to feel that they are part of the institutions of society, which will lead to their being full citizens and to the strengthening of the democratic system. It is with that goal in mind that Peru will participate in the preparations for the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus.

Peru also believes that migration is an instrument of development in States of origin, in host countries and in the migrant communities themselves. We believe that migration is a matter of shared responsibility. We should re-establish the central role of migration as an engine of opportunities for better well-being and progress, diversity and multicultural and tolerant environments in which there is respect for the rights of migrants.

Climate change poses an enormous challenge to our stability and development as a result of global warming, which is due to greenhouse gas emissions emanating mostly from industrialized countries with production patterns and habits that are unsustainable and cannot be replicated. We must clearly and unequivocally acknowledge that climate change is synonymous with a deterioration of conditions for human life on Earth. It is therefore necessary that we step up our efforts to promote ecologically sustainable development that includes shared but differentiated responsibilities.

Water, agriculture, the production of and trade in foodstuffs, the appropriate use of land and natural resources and access to clean sources of energy are fundamental and multidimensional issues for Peru. We reiterate our belief that there is a need to base our efforts on the Bali Road Map and Action Plan, with a view to reaching a comprehensive agreement to reduce polluting gas emissions next year at Copenhagen.

There has been a rise in the need for humanitarian assistance, with the capacity of the United Nations constantly under strain. As a country vulnerable to such disasters, Peru appreciates the support it has received. We urge that the mechanisms of the Office for the

Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and of the Central Emergency Response Fund continue to be strengthened.

In order that it can be more effective in the maintenance of peace and security, the Organization should continue to enhance its capacity to prevent and resolve conflicts. To that end, it should continue to expand its strategic alliances with various organizations and regional arrangements, as it has done with, among others, the European Union, the African Union, NATO, the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organization of American States and the League of Arab States.

The report before us today reminds us that conflicts continue to command priority attention from the Organization and that they require that we establish and deploy timely and multidimensional peacekeeping operations that include strengthened and comprehensive mandates. Despite the difficulties and obstacles, of which we are all aware, peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance operations constitute tangible and effective tools by which the United Nations can stabilize a situation and protect civilians.

In the process of adapting to new situations, we should be mindful of the growing frequency of conflicts between irregular forces and armies. Such conflicts subject civilians to great vulnerability to violations of their human rights and the protection they should enjoy under international humanitarian law. The United Nations should remain vigilant and punish violations of international humanitarian law, prevent impunity and uphold respect for human rights. The Organization should be prepared to take action under the Charter when a State is not in a position to assume its primary responsibility to protect its people. It is also important to bear in mind that States should also contribute to maintaining their own stability, as well as that of their region, while at the same time respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all other countries.

The report of the Secretary-General also includes information about the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Fund and Office established to support post-conflict efforts. Their work should serve to strengthen coordination at the national and international levels in the area of reconstruction.

The Organization has an important role to play in promoting cooperation to combat terrorism. We have made progress by reviewing the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy; however, Member States should also continue to make greater efforts to conclude a counter-terrorism convention as soon as possible.

Peru calls for bolstering specialized bodies and mechanisms in order to continue unabatedly to strengthen joint efforts to combat illicit drug trafficking. We believe that such efforts, along with international cooperation based on solidarity, are necessary to respond to the urgency and magnitude of the problem. The new concept of shared responsibility vis-à-vis transnational drug trafficking therefore calls for decisive efforts and strategic alliances based on a balanced political dialogue.

The United Nations should continue to be the forum in which we address the major threats in the areas of disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We must also deal with the problem of small arms and light weapons and continue to strengthen the United Nations to expand cooperation and put in place binding rules.

Lastly, I believe that it is necessary to reiterate that the international system transcends inter-State relations and that it comprises as well non-governmental organizations, local and international corporations, unions and other civil society actors. The United Nations will benefit from remaining open to involving those stakeholders in its work and in devising proposals that include all actors active in the many crucial issues with an impact on development, equity, security and peace throughout the world.

Mr. Dapkiunas (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The delegation of Belarus supports the view of the Secretary-General as to the scale and seriousness of today's international problems and his conclusion that global challenges cannot be resolved by one State or any group of States. We fully share the view that strategies for resolving global problems should be produced at the global level.

In our view, humankind is today trying to cope with a whole complex of individual crises that cannot be dealt with simply by increasing financial resources or perfecting the organizational machinery. Climate change and the energy and food crises are all parts of one multidimensional global challenge. For that

reason, a successful response to those challenges lies with the United Nations, the only universal organization with a general mandate, and it should be coordinated and multidimensional.

In our view, based on the Secretary-General's proposals, the priorities of United Nations work are to meet the needs of the most needy, resolve global problems and strengthen the Organization.

We believe that the United Nations should pay close attention to the particular needs of Africa. Our approach to the problems of that continent is a test of humankind's capacity to ensure its future. After all, Africa determined, determines and will continue to determine the path of our own development. Humankind originated in Africa. In Africa one thousand years of the world's colonial order came to an end. Today, the African continent is facing problems of a global nature, and successfully solving these problems would provide a tremendous impulse to the progress of the whole international community. Failure would place humankind on the path of regression.

We share the Secretary-General's concern that women remain the most vulnerable social group. Violence against women remains widespread and is a serious obstacle to achieving global development goals. Belarus supports the campaign started by the Secretary-General to put an end to violence against women, mobilize public opinion, strengthen political will and make available resources for improving the situation of women.

As the delegation of a country that has recently been fighting human trafficking — the main victims of which are women — we propose that the Secretary-General, in accordance with his noble intentions, support with practical actions the idea of producing a United Nations plan of action to combat human trafficking. In our view, such a plan could become a fundamental step in our fight against the denial of women's rights. The steps necessary within the United Nations to start work on this plan have already been taken.

Belarus supports the appeal for stepping up the efforts of the international community to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, particularly regarding ensuring access to clean drinking water. The Secretary-General notes that approximately one billion people in the world have no such access. We should give serious thought to defining the development of accessible technology for desalination of sea water as a global task over the next few decades. The United Nations could help create a mechanism for using such technology for all mankind, not just those countries which possess it.

We must also give attention to an important omission in the report: it contains no reference to the global energy crisis. We think that sends the wrong signal to the international community. We call on delegations of Member States and the Secretary-General to pay due attention to the formation of a multidimensional United Nations energy agenda. That agenda should take into account the interests of producers, transit countries and consumers. It should promote international cooperation in disseminating technology for economical and effective energy and alternative and renewable energy sources.

In order to resolve the unprecedented serious task we are facing, we need a stronger, more effective and modern Organization. The working methods of the United Nations should be in keeping with the global nature and scope of international problems. In this regard, the delegation of Belarus supports the initiative of the President of the General Assembly to devote the current session to the problem of democratization of the United Nations, and we intend to take an active part in the implementation. In our view, the process of democratization should begin with the United Nations Secretariat.

The Secretariat should provide an example for the Member States by creating an atmosphere of trust, providing assessments of international situations that are free from political bias and, even in difficult circumstances, displaying an independent, professional approach. In this regard, all the Secretary-General's proposals for reforming the Secretariat should be keeping with the following criteria.

Trust between the Secretariat and all Member States should be enhanced, and the Secretariat should be rendered more politically impartial. As a concrete measure that could truly improve the democratic status of the Secretariat, the delegation of Belarus calls for the implementation of our idea of strict observance of the principals of equitable geographical representation in the appointment of the leadership of every department of the Secretariat. We believe that the top five posts in any department should be distributed among the five regional groups.

With regard to the Secretary-General's proposal for a new architecture of accountability in the Secretariat, this should be pursued by the Fifth Committee. Member States should conduct a detailed study and possibly suggest a number of amendments.

In conclusion, we would like to welcome the efforts of Member States and the Secretary-General to modernize and enhance the effectiveness of the General Assembly's work. We believe it is a good idea to strengthen the practice of thematic debates and interactive discussions on the most topical questions. Such a practice would make it possible to enhance the significance of the Assembly in the life of the international community.

We would like to take this opportunity to draw the attention of the Secretariat to the need to pay greater attention to delegation proposals originating in debates. These valuable ideas should not be allowed to languish and should be taken up and put into effect. We also consider the General Assembly's work to revitalize its activities to be an important instrument for increasing the Assembly's effectiveness.

The results of the work of this session are reassuring. We have succeeded in taking inventory of the decisions taken by the General Assembly in the past and now have insight into what the Secretariat and Member States should work on together so that the role of the General Assembly can live up to the lofty mission assigned to it by the Charter.

Mr. Sen (India): The Secretary-General's report (A/63/1) is dignified in language and public-spirited in intention, and we certainly share and support his ideas that we should achieve results, that we should strengthen this Organization, that we should secure the public good and that we should seize the opportunity. These are the phrases he uses. But in fact it seems to us that in seizing the opportunity, we are really missing it.

Churchill described the pessimist as the person who sees a difficulty in every opportunity and an optimist as one who sees an opportunity in every difficulty. Here, we are actually closer to the former than we are to the latter. There is no sense in this report. As a summary of what has been done, it is fine; it is extremely useful and good.

But as a vision for the future, there is no sense at all in this report of the gravity of crisis that the world has entered. There is no sense that we are in the middle or are approaching probably the most profound crisis since the Great Depression. There is no sense of the popular anger at the gap between democratic laws, on the one hand, and bureaucratic reality and the mess that bureaucrats have made of this world, on the other.

In short, in this fundamental sense the report is inadequate, if not irrelevant. David Harvey, a respected academic who heads the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, described the financial system, as early as 2005, as one in which deregulation has meant that it has become a centre for redistribution from the poor to the rich through stockjobbery, debt peonage and fraud. We have seen asset destruction through inflation and asset stripping through mergers and acquisitions; we have seen a level of debt incumbency that has reduced all populations, even in the developed countries, to debt peonage. That, he says, is the nature of the financial system.

This is as exact a reference as my memory allows, and I think it is an accurate description of the financial system. The results are there for all to see. But in the Secretary-General's report there is no sense of the onset of the situation, which was quite apparent even in August, and even earlier. We are entering into this profound crisis, but there is no sense of that at all.

We have a situation in which the world of Wall Street has certainly ended. The world has not ended, but their world has ended. The masters of the universe on Wall Street have bit the dust, and they find that they have the same war at their gate, the same dust in their mouths as the rest of us have. Ultimately, what we have seen is that a free market, like free love, comes to a bad end. In Flaubert's novel *Madame Bovary*, Madame Bovary could have cheerfully continued committing adultery, except that she overspent. So really, it is the credit crunch that brings her loans to ruin. The Bible says that "those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword", and those who take up investment banking shall perish by investment banking.

Investment banking and the financial market were supposed to achieve total world liquidity and complete risk insurance. In fact, they have shown the Mephistophelian quality of achieving the opposite, namely, the total destruction of world liquidity and the rise of risk to the level of bloodshed and bankruptcy. That is what has really transpired. The effect on the developing world is also going to be profound. Already projects are stopping for lack of equity capital.

The debt crunch is going to become greater and greater because, according to some calculations, mortgage-backed securities amounting to $6 trillion were created by Wall Street. We have seen only the tip of the iceberg. It is really the fear of the unseen part of the iceberg that is causing continued crisis and turbulence. What is more, the sharp decline in exports and the declining commodity prices are going to hurt the developing world.

One can say that the problem affects us both; it affects the poor of both types of countries. That is true. The developing world was, incidentally, asked to actually liberalize capital markets. That was the light we were supposed to follow, the image after which we were supposed to refashion ourselves. It was our great fortune that we did not do so because if we had, the world crisis today would have been a world catastrophe. If you are a developed country you will see a light at the end of the tunnel, but if you are a developing country you know that the light is really the headlight of an approaching train. So we have reached a point where it is no longer a North-South issue at all; it is a problem that affects the poor in both North and South — it cuts across. It is only in this sense, through the realization of the solidarity of suffering, that we can overcome the crisis.

This is, I suppose, what the President of the General Assembly, Father d'Escoto Brockmann, means by brotherhood, where the economic has become the ecumenical. The crisis is profound because it is affecting the real economy in ever-widening circles, like a stone thrown into a pond. Wider and wider concentric circles of crisis are the result. That was actually predicted ages back by John Ruskin, who spoke of "such and such strong hands ... numbed as by nightshade: so many strong men's courage broken, so many productive operations hindered".

It is not the rich, whether in the North or in the South, who are fundamentally bearing the brunt. They have made their money. Phillip Auger, who was an investment banker for 15 or 20 years, has written from the inside in his *The Greed Merchants*, where he says that the young and greedy operatives in the financial sector withdrew $180 billion from the real economy over the last few years, but that wealth was really fairy gold. It vanished with the daylight, and all that gold — again to quote Ruskin — was merely "the gilded index of far-reaching ruin; a wrecker's handful of coin gleaned from the beach to which he has beguiled an argosy".

The problem with this report is that you have no sense of all this and, above all, no sense of what the United Nations can do in terms of its universality, in terms of its convening part, to really begin to rebuild the economic and political governance of the world. Ultimately, what we find is that, through all these crises, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was helpless. It was completely irrelevant. That irrelevance cannot be ended until we address the fundamental issues of the veto, of transparency, of the appointments process and, above all, of quotas. Even the direction the IMF has moved is totally inadequate for the simple reason that, given the depth and scale of the crisis, the creditor-debtor variables are not enough for real reform of the IMF. We are required to embody the democratic principle of "one person, one vote; one nation, one vote", which, at present, is given zero weight in the IMF.

Therefore, unless such a fundamental quota reform takes place, the developing countries cannot be involved in a manner in which their energy and dynamism, which are so crucial, can be used for creating and refashioning the international financial system. It is for the United Nations to carry out a social audit of the Bretton Woods institutions and start giving the parameters for that reform.

Not only is the report completely silent on this, even worse, if you look at the statistical tables in the annex, it actually hides the crisis. It actually foreshadows business as usual, because in the statistical tables it says that there are no figures available for those living under $1 a day.

Today, the more appropriate measure is $1.25 a day, according to the World Bank. We have moved on from $1 a day, and these figures are available. In the same month in which the report was issued, two economists of the World Bank Development Research Group, Martin Ravallion and Shaohue Chen, looked at all the household surveys, the census data, and the national accounts. They looked at international and national pricing data and have concluded that over the last 25 years we have reduced the number of people who live on less than $1.25 a day from 1.9 billion to 1.4 billion. That is a relative, significant decrease, but at the same time the absolute number of people living

on less than $1.25 a day is still formidable: 1.4 billion. Those figures are available.

Similarly, in the statistical tables, the figures regarding the share of gross national product of the lowest quintile of the population are given only for 2005. In other words, there is no possibility for comparison. Figures for earlier years are available. Had the comparison been made, we would have known that the share of the lowest quintile has actually declined sharply over the years. Therefore, the statistical tables really obfuscate and hide; they do not reveal anything or help with anything. The report is statistically irrelevant, in addition to being irrelevant as a whole.

Also important is the fact that, while the report speaks of public goods, public health and climate change, it is completely silent about even a modest issue such as whether we should look at the intellectual property rights (IPR) regime, whether we should set up a commission of experts to look at it because it is completely skewed. After all, knowledge is a public good, but the IPR regime that we have does not ensure a balance between the users of knowledge and the producers of knowledge. Unless we do so, we are not going to have cheaper medicine with which we can tackle the epidemics of the world or affordable mitigation and adaptation technologies with which we can address climate change.

So that is a tremendous lacuna in the report itself. If we look at the IPR regime, it is clear that the United States should be a model for the developing countries. Section 1498 of Title 28 of the United States Code states clearly that the Government can use patents for a public purpose and can even authorize third countries to do so, even without negotiation. That truly is a model for what we should try to achieve.

Similarly, the report is completely silent about what the United Nations could do to stimulate the completely deadlocked Doha Development Round on issues that are necessary, even from a Keynesian point of view, to create the world demand that can get us out of this crisis. Even on those issues, which include cotton, sensitive products and the special safeguards mechanism, no progress at all has been made. In short, here we have an organization — the World Trade Organization — that, like the Bretton Woods institutions, is fast approaching irrelevance and that is completely indifferent to the concerns of the bulk of the membership. If we are going to have subsidies in the developed world and there is a surge of those imported subsidies through imports, then a special safeguards mechanism will surely be required. Or should we continue business as usual, simply protecting commercial interests, and forget about protecting the livelihood concerns of millions of marginal families?

Therefore, on the economic side, I see very little in this report in terms of vision — in terms of really being aware of the crisis that is engulfing us and trying to use the universality of this Organization and its convening power to address it.

The report has much to say about the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and that is welcome. It is a useful summary; the MDGs are important. At the same time, however, there is not a word about how we are going to achieve the MDGs without restructuring international trade and the IPR regime. Perhaps that is why the focus is purely on malaria, mosquito nets and spraying. Obviously, if we are not going to change the IPR regime, we cannot eradicate malaria; we can only go on distributing mosquito nets ad infinitum and go on spraying until we are blue in the face.

So the point is this: unless we really get around to addressing the key issues, including the IPR regime and international trade, and opt for an industrial policy that uses domestic subsidies in the developing world and protective tariffs to shield industry so that we have economic development, we will have no other alternative but to go on distributing mosquito nets. Therefore, we will not be achieving economic development; we will be achieving only welfare colonialism.

Even if we come down to the level of detail, what does the report do? We are even redistributing targets: Target 1.B is shifted from MDG 8 to MDG 1. In other words, we are undermining the legitimacy of the MDG framework; we are undermining the global partnership; we are undermining the measurement of progress. Therefore — and this is very important — we request that the Secretary-General go back to the earlier targets, particularly in the case of Target 1.B. In fact, we should be looking at more effective indicators for measuring and monitoring the achievement of MDG 8.

So those are some thoughts that I wanted to share with members. Before concluding, however, I would like to look very briefly at a few other issues.

The report mentions the responsibility to protect, which is important in terms of human rights, but is completely silent about comprehensive reform of the Security Council. In its present form, the Council has too narrow a political basis to have the impartiality to actually implement any kind of responsibility to protect. Then again, if we look at the statistical tables, we find that the share of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States in official development assistance (ODA) is declining, including in absolute terms. Yet, there is not a word that those States should have access to the Security Council, whose working methods and membership should be radically transformed. There is a problem regarding peace and security — even the report cannot totally hide that — yet there is complete silence about the need to totally reform the Council. In short, the report has nothing whatsoever to say about institutional rebuilding and reform of international political and economic governance, without which we cannot even hope to address this crisis, let alone come out of it.

Then again, let us take a look at some of the other issues. It is good that the report speaks of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, but there is nothing about the need to complete the keystone of that arch: the comprehensive convention on international terrorism. That is necessary, particularly when we consider that we have come so close — in terms of our application of international humanitarian law — to an understanding on article 20, which was formerly article 18.

Similarly, with regard to system-wide coherence, there is nothing at all in the report about the flow of voluntary funding having to be controlled and used by the United Nations and subjected to United Nations budgetary discipline — the discipline of the Fifth Committee. There is some degree of complements on the reform of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, in which the Department was divided in two, creating the Department of Field Support. But the jury is still out regarding how effective that has been. We all know that, in the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), representatives from the field were not able to show that there had been any improvement in efficiency or unity of command. Indeed, more resources have been requested to restore the unity of command following the division. In other words, we divide so that we can ask for more resources in order to unite. That is not reform, but a way to overcome the zero-budget-growth imperative and acquire resources by other means.

We are all in favour of preventive diplomacy; clearly, an ounce of prevention is better than a ton of cure. At the same time, however, we must ask ourselves whether we will not be creating new bureaucratic structures and duplicating capacity.

Finally, on the ACABQ — since I have mentioned the ACABQ — let us turn to the accountability framework. The ACABQ, if I remember correctly, said regarding the accountability framework, internal accountability, enterprise resource management and results-based management that there is no clear statement in the report on those subjects or on how the objectives that have been defined are to be achieved, nor has any consistent benchmark been provided. So, ultimately, we are left with the aphorism that the Member States have to be accountable to the Organization. Either that means that the Organization is its Member States and they are accountable in that sense, in which case the statement, the aphorism, is redundant — it is a tautology — or it means that we have to be accountable to the Secretariat, which is truly topsy-turvy and completely unacceptable.

I will not take up more time. I notice I have spoken for 10 or 15 minutes or more, but before I finish, I would like to conclude by saying that there is the very important issue of disarmament and non-proliferation, where we also would have looked for more details, some greater vision of what we need to do, because that certainly is linked to the fundamental problems of peace and security in the world.

Here again, disarmament is crucial for us particularly, because it is the twentieth anniversary of the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan, which he outlined at the third special session on disarmament and in large part retains its relevance. That is why our Prime Minister in the general debate at the current session called for a nuclear weapons convention that would be universal and non-discriminatory and would prohibit in a time-bound manner the development, production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons.

We look forward to suggestions on how we are going to move in that direction. Therefore, I would suggest that this report should be used simply as a kind of summary of some of the things that have happened, but we in this Hall have to forge for ourselves practical

instruments to address the real crisis in the world by rebuilding the international political economic governance of the world in an institutional sense, which the United Nations alone with its universality and its convening power is able to do.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, for his valuable report on the work of the Organization (A/63/1). The report reflects a clear vision in addressing contemporary international issues, focusing on the imperative of enhancing organized collective action aimed at strengthening the role and credibility of the United Nations in working towards a better future for humanity.

I would also like to express our full concurrence with the clear message of the Secretary-General that we will rise or fall together depending on the effectiveness of our common response and our ability to achieve full accountability as a fundamental organizing principle and operational guideline for our Organization.

However, before commenting further on the report of the Secretary-General, I would like to state that in addition to achieving accountability we need to highlight the importance of strengthening trust between all Member States. That trust constitutes a fundamental pillar for any collective action, especially in the United Nations, but it has been hampered in recent years by the harmful non-implementation of agreed commitments made at previous United Nations summits and conferences, especially in the field of development, and by attempts by some to impose specific patterns and concepts that do not take into account the political, economic, cultural and religious diversity of Member States, as well as the growing trend by some Members to break with collective action in the Organization, moving towards unilateralism based on political or military alliances or driven by economic might.

Hence, the first step in implementing the principle of full accountability should be an explicit commitment by all States to support collective international action. In order for that to be accomplished, we should strive to make that collective action conducive to fulfilling the interests of our peoples in development, peace and security and to the enjoyment of the highest standards of democracy, human rights and basic freedoms, independent of the phenomena of politicization, selectivity and double standards currently witnessed in addressing global issues.

The Secretary-General has allocated more than half of his report and its annexes to the issue of development. It is worth noting that the two high-level meetings convened at the inauguration of the current General Assembly session have undoubtedly led to new common understandings on the increasing development needs that have to be addressed with maximum possible effectiveness, in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to enable Africa to fulfil its developmental needs and goals. That requires a leading role on the part of the United Nations in financing that development, in addition to the important role played by the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, which we look forward to making a success by the end of this year.

There is also a need to create financing mechanisms within the programme budget of the United Nations, which should not be left to rely on voluntary contributions. It is also imperative to strengthen the application of national ownership and to build development efforts on the basis of national strategies without conditionality.

Next year, as the Secretary-General stated, must become a year of action, in order to secure food, housing, education and health for those most in need, in addition to enhancing the strategy led by the Secretary-General to bolster the ability of the African States to achieve the MDGs and other internationally agreed development goals. In that connection, we support the proposals of the Secretary-General to promote and revitalize the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and to provide the necessary financial resources to achieve that goal.

Much as we attach importance to development, we equally call for enhancing the capability of the United Nations in the settlement of disputes, its capacities not only in preventive diplomacy but also in peacekeeping missions. While we support strengthening the role of the Department of Political Affairs in those two important fields and that of the Secretary-General in conducting good offices, the United Nations is duty-bound to enhance its role in

achieving the peaceful settlement of all disputes and not to confine its efforts to dispatching peacekeeping missions for dozens of years without exerting a parallel effort to achieve the necessary peaceful settlement.

We welcome the role of the United Nations as embodied in the international Quartet and the United Nations special envoys to the Middle East. However, we believe in the importance of strengthening its role in a more active way, in order to achieve a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, especially as the terms of reference for the peace process were created here in the United Nations and will remain the basis governing any final settlement.

Along the same lines, we must strengthen the role of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Office and Peacebuilding Fund in a framework conducive to greater coordination between the role of the Secretary-General, on the one hand, and the role of the Commission, on the other, especially in view of the leading operational role assumed by the Commission on the ground. In supporting international action to confront the spiralling food crisis, we also welcome the initiative of the Secretary-General to formulate a comprehensive strategy to deal with that crisis, including a quick response to the humanitarian situation created by the crisis. That also requires frank discussion of the activities of the Central Emergency Response Fund, to which developed countries have contributed generously in addressing humanitarian crises, but, unfortunately, refrain from showing the same kind of contribution in implementing internationally agreed commitments within the United Nations, especially in the field of development.

The year 2008 marks the sixtieth anniversary of United Nations activities in the field of peacekeeping. It also coincides with the sixtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which undoubtedly requires of us a thorough assessment of each of these three important fields.

In the field of peacekeeping, Egypt has supported the proposals of the Secretary-General for restructuring the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the establishment of the Department of Field Support. At the same time, we have to express concern over the continuing expansion in the budget of peacekeeping operations compared to the total budget of the Organization. We also wish to voice our concern that the continuation of peacekeeping operations has not been coupled with serious efforts by the Organization to reach comprehensive peace agreements. In this context, we agree with the Secretary-General's assertion in his report that there is a need for "sustained political engagement with relevant parties so that there is a peace to keep" (*A/63/1, para. 49*).

As Egypt has provided and will continue to provide more of its best men and women to participate in United Nations peacekeeping missions, believing in the significance of the concept of international collective security, it also calls for a higher degree of coordination between the troop-contributing countries (TCCs) and the Security Council, in order to achieve stability in the international presence in the field without delay.

In the field of human rights, we welcome the progress achieved in the work of the Human Rights Council as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly. On this score, we share the view of the Secretary-General that we have achieved extensive international acceptance of human rights standards. Yet we emphasize the necessity of respecting cultural, religious and ethnic diversity in dealing with these issues, and the necessity of refraining from any attempt to impose concepts that have not been agreed upon. We caution against the attempts of some to promote themselves as the guardians of human rights issues at the United Nations. All of us believe in the importance of human rights and in the necessity of securing those rights for all peoples within an internationally agreed framework, and foremost among these rights is the right to development.

Concerning the new issues currently under discussion, Egypt participates in the ongoing consultations regarding paragraphs 138 and 139 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome document on the responsibility to protect. We stand ready to discuss the implementation of these two paragraphs within the General Assembly, with a view to reaching clear agreement on the scope of these two paragraphs regarding their relation to national sovereignty as well as the roles of the General Assembly and the Security Council in this area.

Moving to the question of disarmament, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is undoubtedly passing through its most serious

crisis at present, especially in view of its failure to achieve universality and its explicit failure to implement all elements of the indefinite extension package agreed upon in 1995, particularly the Middle East resolution. In addition, this situation has also been aggravated by efforts aimed at strengthening the international handling of non-proliferation issues at the expense both of achieving the universality of the NPT of the issues of nuclear disarmament. Unfortunately, all these aspects presage a potential threat to international faith in the NPT and the indefinite extension package.

The passing of 40 years since the adoption of the NPT necessarily sets off a warning bell with respect to international efforts aimed at strengthening implementation of the Treaty, in order to achieve a successful review of the Treaty by 2010, strengthen the NPT regime, achieve nuclear disarmament, and promote the shared belief that the Treaty should be upheld as the cornerstone of international collective security in the nuclear field.

Similarly, the success of the review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy at the beginning of September of this year should be complemented by strenuous efforts to strengthen the participation of Member States in the Strategy's implementation. Implementation should not be confined to the committees formed by the Secretariat on its own initiative.

In conclusion, I wish to applaud the proposals of the Secretary-General in the various fields of reform, including achieving system-wide coherence in the work of the Organization, strengthening accountability in the Secretariat, promoting the administration of justice and making full use of information and communications technology. I should also like to commend the Secretary-General's policy of openness towards the Member States through regular periodic briefings with the General Assembly, fostering cooperation with regional organizations and the participation of civil society and the private sector in the activities of the Organization, based on the fulfilment of the common interests of Member States within the provisions of the Charter.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland): The annual report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/63/1) provides a good overview of the accomplishments during the past year and the complicated challenges ahead. The report helps us to keep our focus, and I will touch briefly upon the three key areas the Secretary-General points out in the report.

Delivering results for people most in need is critical for maintaining peace and security, which is a complex, multidimensional task. Poverty and underdevelopment are among the greatest challenges the international community is faced with today.

We are halfway towards the year 2015, the target date for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Although considerable progress has been made, it remains our grave concern that many developing countries have little chance of achieving the goals by 2015. More is needed to be done with regard to financing for development. The forthcoming meeting in Doha on financing for development will test the resolve of the international community.

The protection and promotion of fundamental human rights is one of the primary aims in the area of the maintenance of peace and security. In his report, the Secretary-General notes the significant progress made by the international community in advancing human rights standards and mechanisms.

Women's rights are fundamental human rights and, as such, are important in themselves. Moreover, it has become a well-known fact that gender equality and women's empowerment are also smart economics, without which there could be no poverty eradication and no achievement of the MDGs. Likewise, there is a clear gender dimension when it comes to conflict, peace and security, and women have a distinctive and important role to play in both conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

We strongly support the reinforcement of the work of the United Nations in the field of conflict prevention, which is indeed in line with the holistic approach we have increasingly applied to our work. We say that there is no security without development and no development without security, as has so often been said in this Hall.

Securing global goods is another important key for maintaining peace and security. Climate change is a threat to human security. The most vulnerable, including the small island developing States and the least developed countries, which will be hardest hit, are the least responsible for causing climate change. We

must accept the fact that securing a safe future for mankind is the common responsibility of all nations. The economic costs of doing so must be shared according to means.

In our search for peace and security, all Member States must continue their joint effort in the fight against terrorism. Although much has already been done under the auspices of the United Nations, the persistence of, and even increase in terrorist attacks remains of grave concern. Therefore, more needs to be done, and Iceland supports the conclusion of an international counter-terrorism convention. A strengthened international legal framework would solidify counter-terrorism efforts and help ensure that our fundamental respect for human rights and humanitarian law is not sacrificed in the battle.

The continued proliferation of arms is a constant threat to peace and security and Iceland regrets the limited progress in the field of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

The proliferation of nuclear weapons, with their immense destructive power, is especially worrisome, and Iceland fully supports the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency. However, small arms and light weapons also pose a great danger, and no effort should be spared in trying to decrease the death toll claimed by those weapons. An important step in that direction is the curbing of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and Iceland is among those countries that have advocated the conclusion of binding legal instruments on brokering in small arms and light weapons, as well as on marking and tracing. Further, the conclusion of an arms trade treaty would certainly be a significant achievement towards the same end.

We fully agree with the Secretary-General that we have to create a stronger United Nations by working towards full accountability. Although frustration and impatience often characterize views of how the United Nations addresses global challenges, the fact of the matter is that the United Nations system as a whole indisputably plays a central role in preserving peace, staving off hunger and famine, and coordinating the world response to the multitude of crises facing humankind at various times. Let us not forget that the United Nations can do only what its Member States are willing to let it do. It is our responsibility to give the United Nations the necessary means and mandates for it to effectively address current threats and challenges.

The United Nations plays a crucial role in the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, and it is important that the Organization be fully equipped, both financially and institutionally, to address those important issues. At the moment, that is unfortunately not the case. It has been recognized that the United Nations work in that field is often underresourced, fragmented and lacking in accountability. In Iceland's view, it is of utmost importance that those shortcomings be addressed during the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, with the aim of building a stronger United Nations that is more responsive, coherent and accountable, to the benefit of all.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.